



ACCORD OCCASIONAL PAPER

Number 1/97

UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA: LESSONS FOR THE OAU AND SADC

by Dr. Chris Alden*

I. Introduction

The creation of United Nations peacekeeping and the birth pangs of independent Africa are intertwined with the emergence of the contemporary era. With roughly half of all UN peacekeeping missions being conducted in Africa, the continent has been the proving ground for the innovations to the internationally sanctioned collective security system. More than any other region, the combined stresses of the post Cold War era — from ethnic strife to state collapse — have converged upon Africa, posing a severe challenge to the international community. At the same time, the difficulties experienced by the United Nations, symbolized by the debacle in Somalia, has caused the organization to reconsider its role in conflict management. In its stead, the UN is encouraging regional and sub-regional organizations to take up the mantle of conflict management in their respective regions. In the case of Africa, the international community has identified the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) as key institutions whose capacity in peacekeeping should be expanded in light of its own diminished capacity.

This paper will seek to derive lessons for regional and sub-regional organizations from the United Nations peacekeeping experience in Africa since its onset in 1956. To do so, it will initially present a typology of peacekeeping followed by an outline of five problematic areas which have confronted the United Nations in its conduct of peacekeeping operations in Africa.

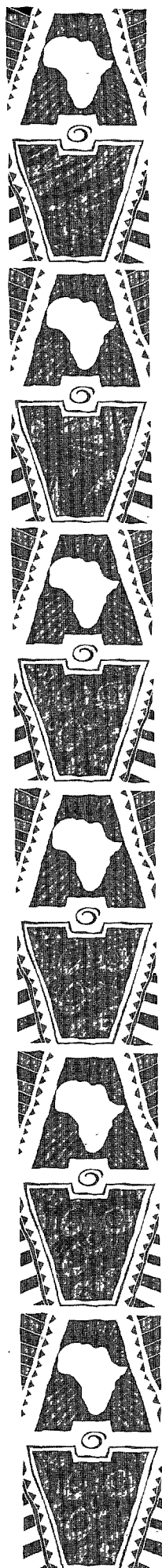
II. A Typology of Peacekeeping

The genesis of the concept of peacekeeping is a product of the circumstances facing the United Nations (UN) in the aftermath of the Second World War. With the shadow of the Cold War falling across this nascent institution and impinging upon its capacity to act on threats to international security, the leaders of the UN sought to create a role for the organization through the innovation of peacekeeping. Forty years later, the thawing of bi-polar hostilities coincided with the elevation of the UN to the focal point of responsibility for international security and,

* Dr. Chris Alden

Senior Lecturer, Department of International Relations
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

*Dr Chris Alden is a Senior Lecturer with the Department of International Relations at Wits University. The author of *Apartheid's Last Stand: the Rise and Fall of the South African Security State* (London: Macmillan 1996), he has published on UN and regional security issues, as well as South African foreign policy and Mozambican politics. Dr Alden was a MacArthur Fellow at Cambridge University studying the UN and demilitarization of regional conflicts in 1994-95.*



with that, a dramatic increase in the number and scope of peacekeeping operations. A typology of UN peacekeeping, from classic to multi-dimensional and so-called “third generation”, underscores the changing dynamics of this activity since its inception.

A. Classic Peacekeeping

As initially conceived, the UN’s role in maintaining peace and security in the world was to have centred upon the Security Council’s enhanced powers as mandated by the UN Charter. Chapters Six and Seven of the Charter spelled out the responsibilities of the UN towards breaches to international security, as well as providing a series of graduated measures for managing crises. However, through the exercising of the veto by the super powers, the capacity of the UN to act in matters of international concern were severely circumscribed. Under Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, the organization nonetheless sought to find a relevant role within the confines of the Cold War. The UN Emergency Force, set up to monitor the withdrawal of Anglo-French-Israeli troops in the Sinai in 1956, evolved from an ad hoc response to a particular crisis, to an established formula for generalized limited UN intervention known as peacekeeping. Thus it was that between 1956 and 1988 the UN embarked on thirteen peacekeeping missions which, while severely restricted in scope, played a constructive role in conflict management and prevention.

The contours of classic peacekeeping which evolved during this period were as follows:

- the UN obtained consent of parties to the conflict in advance of its intervention;
- UN troops were lightly armed and drawn from states outside of the Security Council;
- the UN’s mandate was principally focused on monitoring adherence to a cease fire agreement.

These were employed by the UN to positive effect in a diversity of settings giving weight to the call for an extension of the UN’s role in conflict management and resolution at the end of the Cold War.

B. Multi-dimensional Peacekeeping

As much as classic peacekeeping was a step child of the Cold War, so too was its progeny, multi-dimensional peacekeeping, was a product of the termination of that self-same era. Multi-dimensional peacekeeping emerged out of the thawing of Cold War conflicts promoted by the waning years of the Reagan-Bush and Gorbachev administrations. Committed to winding down super power support for a host of Cold War-inspired conflicts in the Third World, Washington and Moscow abandoned their indifference towards the UN and looked to the organization to play a facilitating role in bringing these conflicts to a peaceful resolution. The result was the onset of a flurry of UN peacekeeping operations across the globe.

Sometimes referred to as “second generation” or “wider” peacekeeping, this extension of peacekeeping operations is characterized by both an expanded remit and an elaborated capacity and structure. Specifically, multi-dimensional peacekeeping involves a mandate that includes:

- demilitarization of conflict, from cease fire monitoring to disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants;
- humanitarian assistance provisions;
- election monitoring, including voter registration and related activities.

As is the case in classic peacekeeping, the consent of parties to the conflict authorizing UN intervention is obtained in the negotiated format which accompanies a formal peace settlement.

C. “Third Generation” Peacekeeping?

Finally, in recent years a debate has emerged as to the development of a new type of peacekeeping. Rooted in the changing assumptions governing the international system in the aftermath of the Cold War, this new approach to peacekeeping is the most overtly interventionist. The definition of international security, which has served to underpin the role of the UN in that process, has been predicated on the importance of maintaining the sanctity of the state over and above other concerns codified in

the UN Charter. Thus, through the collective security measures called for in Chapters Six and Seven of the UN Charter, and further buttressed by the formation of peacekeeping in its classic and multi-dimensional varieties, the UN has consistently acted on issues which first and foremost threaten the security of interstate relations (and, by definition, the international system). However, Security Council sanctioned action in Iraq has given rise to an expansion of the UN's role in intrastate conflict, especially in those crises which can be characterized as principally "humanitarian" in content.

Humanitarian intervention or "third generation" peacekeeping deliberately forswears some of the operating constraints which have been the hallmark of UN intervention, such as securing the consent of parties to the conflict, at the same time as undertaking a significant role in managing the complexities of conflicts, as well as reconstructing society in its aftermath. Notably, multi-dimensional peacekeeping often involved civil war conditions which, despite an overlay of Cold War ideology, perhaps gave impetus to the belief that the UN would be able to engage more deeply in contested areas that involved issues such as ethnic conflict and state collapse or secessionism. The subsequent problems encountered by the UN in implementing this deeply interventionist approach, especially on the Horn of Africa and the Balkans, have caused all participants in this process to re-think the organization's position on engaging in complex humanitarian emergencies.

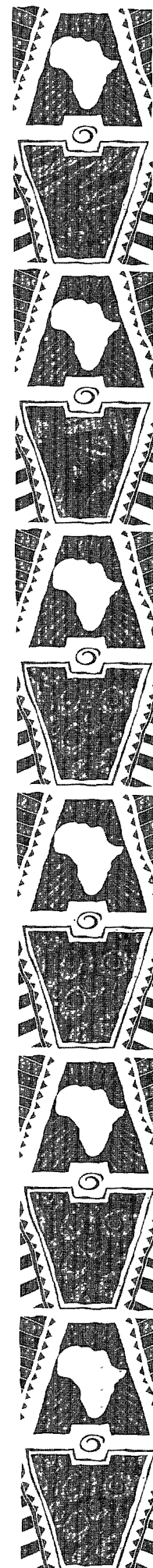
III. Implementing Peacekeeping in Africa

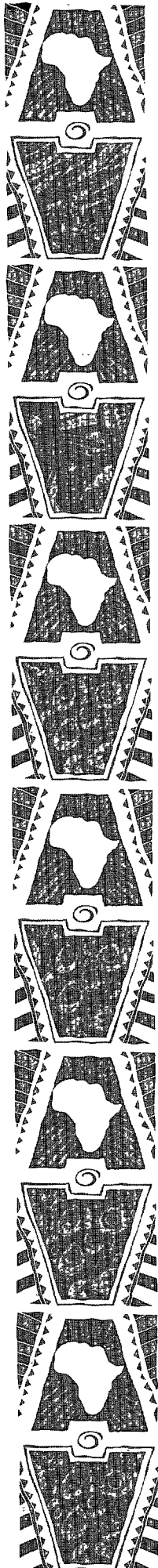
The type of peacekeeping operations in Africa have, by and large, been those which fall into the category of classic or multi-dimensional peacekeeping. At the same time, the spectacular failures of UN peacekeeping on the continent have been of the "third generation" variant experienced in the Congo and Somalia. There are a number of themes which one could examine in analyzing this topic. This paper will focus on five particularly appropriate issues to consider in the construction and deployment of a peacekeeping force. They are: issues of consent, mandate, coordination, military and finance. It will draw on case studies of UN peacekeeping in Africa to illustrate these basic concerns. These UN operations include the United Nations Operation to the Congo (ONUC, 1960-64), the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia (1988-1990), the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM I and II) in Angola (1990-1993), the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ, 1992-1994) and the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM, 1992-4). Rather than detail each operation, the principal features will be introduced to highlight the particular issues of special relevance to regional and sub-regional organizations.

A. The Issue of Consent

One of the sine qua non's of classic peacekeeping and multi-dimensional peacekeeping (and one which seems to have evaporated with the onset of "third generation" peacekeeping), is the need for consent of the parties to the conflict as a prelude to the establishment of a peacekeeping operation. Securing and retaining this position as an "honest broker" is vital to the fulfilment of the peacekeeping role in conflict management and resolution. While it is virtually inevitable that this status is called into question at various points during the course of a mission (as each party is faced with the painful realization of actually implementing the terms of the peace settlement), nonetheless their overt consent to the UN role is fundamental in maintaining their adherence to the peace process.

The UN mission to Somalia represents an especially egregious expression of the failure to achieve consent of the parties to the conflict and the costs of that failure. With the collapse of authority in Somalia in 1991 and the concurrent spectacle of a looming humanitarian disaster, the international community put together a UN mission explicitly charged to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance by the NGO community based in that country. Lacking the consent of the warring factions within the strife torn territory, the UN nonetheless sought to intervene to avert massive starvation by, in the words of Security Council Resolution 794, using "all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia". A hastily negotiated cease fire agreement between major Somali faction leaders and the UN in December 1992, coupled with the lack of resistance to the deployment of the American-led United Task Force (UNITAF), seemed to initially augur well for the mission. But, as the pressures increase UNITAF's engagement in the range of secu-





city issues, from armaments to the absence of law and order increased, so the fragile nature of the consensus achieved with the Somali factions was revealed. While the UN attempted to broker a long term political settlement amongst the warring factions in Addis Ababa, UNITAF became increasingly embroiled in Somali politics. Attempts to disarm one faction in Kismayu and Mogadishu gave rise to beliefs of UN favouritism, which in turn fueled outright attacks against UN peacekeepers. The ill-advised public targeting of General Aideed by American officials destroyed any remaining perception of UNITAF neutrality and, subsequently, the overall credibility of the UN operation degenerated into an international fiasco. Thus the UN mission found itself drawn into the factional fighting and, ultimately, became both a partisan and target of military action by the Somali forces. In fact, the UN mission to Somalia raised the question as to the limits of "third generation" peacekeeping, as well as the difficulties in setting limits on engagement when the situation on the ground remains very fluid.

B. The Definition of the Mission

Defining the mandate of a UN mission has proved to be crucial to its ability to operate successfully, both in terms of setting viable objectives and implementing these targets. A loose, ill-defined mandate inhibits effective operational planning, and can result in poor implementation in the field or even local officials (as has happened to the UN in the Congo) extending operations beyond the intended scope of the mission's mandate. At the same time, it must be said that an excessively constrictive or narrow mandate may prove to be a hindrance to tackling the various contingencies which inevitably appear in the course of a UN peacekeeping operation. The UN peacekeeping operation in Angola represents a cogent example of a poorly conceived mandate having a disastrous effect upon the conduct of a peacekeeping operation and, ultimately, impacting upon the tragic collapse of the peace settlement in that country. Saddled with a mandate that consigned the UN role to that of an observer to the peace process, coupled with a budget that was insufficient to perform even this task, and two parties which had not in fact genuinely reconciled themselves to the terms of the peace settlement, UNAVEM II was cursed from the start. In its limited role as observer to the demilitarization programme and elections, UNAVEM officials desperately attempted to marshal their meagre resources to fulfil these responsibilities. 350 military and 126 police observers were assigned to 50 cantonment areas and 32 "critical points" which themselves were inadequately sited and provisioned, only to find that their task was further hampered by Angolan intransigence and a host of other logistical problems (further details of the demilitarization fiasco in Angola are treated in a following section on that subject). Thus, when the election results were nullified by UNITA, the "fig leaf" of UN legitimization of the deeply flawed demilitarization process was exposed and UN credibility severely damaged. Unable to halt the slide back into civil war, the UN had to effectively scale down its mission.

Nevertheless, the history of UN peacekeeping in Africa would indicate that the governing authority — the Security Council — can exercise its prerogative and expand its mandate if it deems there to be sufficient reason to do so. But, in fact, the Security Council is much more concerned with the activity of the Special Representative of the Security Council (SRSG) and their lieutenants willfully overstepping their mandate, and thereby committing the organization to a position which is at odds with its overall mission. The classic example of this is the UN mission to the Congo, where the local UN representative in the province of Katanga unilaterally authorized a strike by UN forces against separatist positions in the capitol. In addition to causing loss of life, the neutrality of the organization was called into question, and therefore its overall position in the Congo crisis.

C. The Problem of Coordination

Coordination among UN agencies with donors, NGOs and host governments, has proven to be a systemic concern for UN peacekeeping operations. Marrying the often disparate bureaucratic interests of these organizations, whose overlapping mandates could argue for conflict as much as collaboration, as well as meeting the logistical requirements of a peacekeeping mission under circumstances of extreme pressure, is one of the severest challenges facing UN peacekeeping. The recent call for a rapid response volunteer force is a reaction to the difficulties experienced in putting together a peacekeeping force

from the world's militaries. Perhaps even more daunting than the establishment of a UN military force in a given peacekeeping operation is the coordination requirements inherent in multi-dimensional peacekeeping. With everything from humanitarian assistance to election monitoring activities featuring in the operation, the task of pulling together an ongoing and coherent peacekeeping mission becomes all the more complex. Issues of command and control, exacerbated by the conflicting lines of authority, make the business of setting and/or implementing policy exceedingly difficult, especially for the senior UN representatives on the ground.

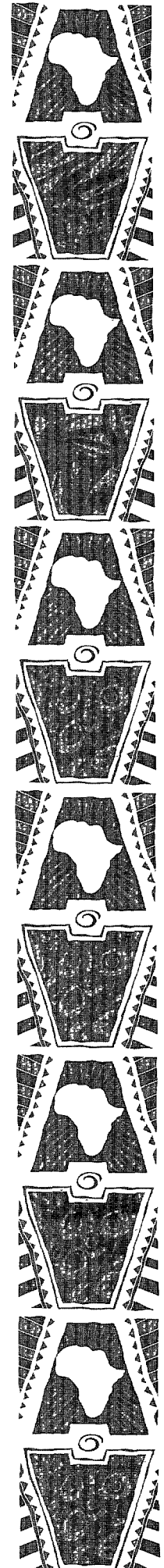
The UN mission to Mozambique perhaps comes closest to overt cooperation and, at the same time, highlights the prospects and pitfalls of coordination both within the UN system and with the relevant NGOs, donor states and development agencies. At the instigation of the donor community and the newly formed UN Department of Humanitarian Assistance, the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance Coordination (UNOHAC) was created to administer ONUMOZ's humanitarian objectives. Specifically, UNOHAC was mandated with developing an overall plan to address the issues of resettlement of demobilized soldiers and the development of a country-wide demining programme. At the heart of the UNOHAC effort was to be an administrative structure, replicated at both the national and provincial levels, that would oversee both the introduction of emergency assistance into the rural areas, and manage the long term elements of the demobilization process.

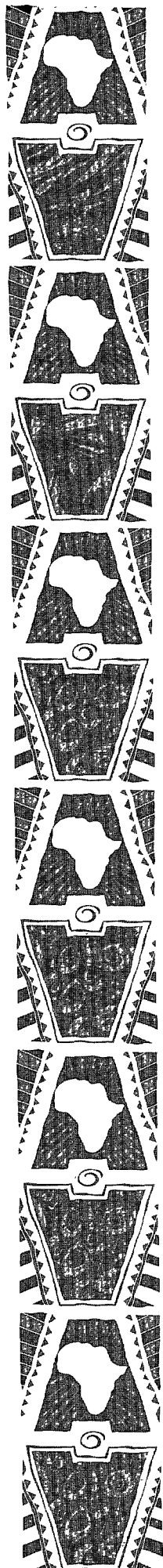
In carrying out its mandate, UNOHAC sought to utilize the range of development and refugee support agencies which traditionally worked in the field of humanitarian assistance. In the area of demilitarization, UNOHAC contracted the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to organize the transportation of demobilized soldiers and their families. The World Food Programme was employed to provide foodstuffs for the Assembly Areas. For the provisions of long term assistance to ex-combatants, UNOHAC turned to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), whose lengthy experience in the country and in the field of development, made it eminently qualified for this role. UNDP, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, were to put into play the Reintegration Support Scheme, while IOM was to work with a joint Government-Renamo Commission in developing an Information and Referral Service. Finally, in the crucial area of demining, UNOHAC entered into a lengthy process of contracting out to suitable companies or development agencies for the identification and eventual demining of the land mines in the country.

This admirable structure was, however, to experience some problems in implementation. The ONUMOZ humanitarian assistance programme, initially conceived as an innovative attempt at identifying and coordinating existing expertise in the field, was subject to growing controversy as the mission progressed. This was especially the case with the demining component of the demilitarization programme, in which conflicting agencies of the UN and donors paralyzed the process for well over a year, costing numerous innocent lives. Nonetheless, through its provisions for food disbursement and primary health care to the Assembly Areas, transportation of demobilized soldiers and their dependents, and its long term reintegration projects for ex-combatants, UNOHAC made a considerable contribution to meeting the humanitarian assistance dimensions of the demilitarization programme. That being said, the difficulties experienced in Mozambique and the conflicts which ensued between various UN agencies and donor countries, was to sour the cooperative imperative so much that UNAVEM III's coordinated humanitarian assistance programme was deliberately marginalized by all major parties.

D. The Issue of the Military

At the heart of a peacekeeping operation is the issue of demilitarization of conflict. Demilitarization is the process of dismantling the physical instruments of conflict, namely the military and its weaponry. It develops out of a particular political context, one which sets the terms of the negotiated settlement of armed conflict in a given territory and ultimately exercises a determining influence on the outcome of any demilitarization programme. It consists of five basic activities, linked sequentially, namely: monitoring a cease fire; cantonment, demobilization and repatriation of soldiers; collection and destruction of weaponry (including land mines); and integrating opposing forces into a new national military force. A sixth, the integration of demobilized soldiers into civilian life, has been recognized as a crucial element in the long term viability of this process. The two examples of UN peacekeeping operations in Mozambique and Angola illustrate the difficulties associated with imple-





menting a demilitarization programme.

In the case of Mozambique, the initial step in implementing the demilitarization programme was to bring in the UN peacekeeping forces to monitor the withdrawal of Zimbabwean and Malawian troops. Situated along the transport corridors which cut across the country, ONUMOZ would have to organize a phased pullout of foreign soldiers concurrent with the introduction of UN peacekeeping forces. The complications involved in putting together a UN peacekeeping force composed of sixteen different national militaries and securing a Status of Forces Agreement with the Government, which allows UN troops freedom of movement and immunity from local taxation and import duties, slowed the introduction of 6,000 UN "blue helmets" into the country by several months. Concurrent with the introduction of UN peacekeeping forces was the monitoring of the cease fire between the Government and Renamo. As it transpired, the overwhelming majority of cease fire violations were centred around movement of troops rather than accusations of shooting incidents or attacks. The constant shifting of forces from one location to another was a product of each side's anticipation of or response to developments in the peace process, especially with regard to demobilization and the forthcoming elections.

The next phase of demilitarization, the demobilization of Government and Renamo troops, proved to be exceedingly problematic. In the first instance, the actual location of the Assembly Areas was a source of contention. Both parties sought to retain effective control of territory, thus the selection of Assembly Areas was made on a strategic basis which ignored simple logistical criteria such as proximity to roads and water for supply to the camps. These and other complications delayed this potentially destructive process for a full year, with all 49 Assembly Areas only becoming operational in February 1994. The slow process of demobilization, a product of continuing political intransigence by the Government and Renamo (especially in identifying suitable candidates for the new national military), was compounded by difficulties in obtaining food and water in the Assembly Areas. The result was that the troops began to stage a series of disturbances in the Assembly Areas. By 1 September 1994, 37 reported incidents had occurred in Renamo Assembly Areas and 40 in Government Assembly Areas. By July 1994, with the deadline for complete demobilization just weeks away, 84% of the Government and 90% of Renamo troops were housed in the Assembly Areas. It was clear to ONUMOZ observers from the pattern of registration that both parties were withholding their crack troops and weaponry for the last. In spite of these problems, demobilization was completed on 15 August, the final total of registered soldiers was 64,130 (Government) and 22,637 (Renamo). At the same time, the UN mission privately acknowledged that both sides retained forces outside of the demobilization process, approximately 5,000 Government troops and 2,000 Renamo troops, as a hedge against post-electoral crises.

The establishment of the Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique (FADM) was another contentious aspect of the demilitarization programme. Portugal, France and Great Britain were to take the leading role and with the signing of the Lisbon Declaration in July 1993, the programme was officially inaugurated. After a delay of several months, 550 soldiers from both sides were sent to a camp in Nyanga, Zimbabwe, where British officers provided instruction on aspects of military training which the Mozambicans were expected to pass on to their own troops back home. It was only in early 1994 that 200 Mozambican officers and 450 commandos embarked on training courses organized by the Portuguese, while the French commenced their mine training programme in July. Continuing acrimony between the two Mozambican parties, coupled with the slowness in identifying the potential new recruits, continually threatened to paralyse the process. Joint command of the new army was finally agreed upon in January 1994, while eighty top officers were appointed in June to command the newly created infantry battalions. Delays in the supply of new equipment and the renovation of inadequate training facilities, coupled with the prolonged process of identifying new soldiers, forced the duration of training into six weeks. Unhappiness over the prospect of being forced to continue in the military brought about strikes and desertions. By election time in October 1994, less than 10,000 soldiers had completed their training and Mozambican officials were lowering the target size of the FADM to 15,000.

Turning to the case of Angola, the inadequate mandate noted above — which translated into insufficient personnel and budget — crippled the ability of UNAVEM II to act effectively in demilitarization. In fact, the demobilization of Angolan soldiers was by all accounts a dismal failure. Conditions in the Assembly Areas were appalling, lacking all the pre-requisites for such an operation such as proper shel-

ter, food and water. Rioting Government soldiers, protesting the absence of basic necessities in the Assembly Areas and the overall slowness of the demobilization process, posed a continual problem for the UN mission. The unwillingness of the Government to provide the requisited transportation and foodstuffs for the assembled troops proved to be a major stumbling block in the demobilization process. Efforts by UNAVEM II military observers to develop an accurate count of the number of demobilized soldiers were hampered to the extreme by the shortage of UN personnel. Insufficient controls for monitoring the movement of troops, causing UNAVEM military observers to resort to weekly estimates of encamped troops, rendered UN monitoring irrelevant. In contrast to FAPLA, UNITA forces remained largely disciplined and under central control. However, the leadership proved to be generally unwilling to engage its troops in the demobilization process. UNITA cited the lack of preparation on the part of the international community for the integration of its troops into civilian life as a reason for withholding from the process. The difficulties of gaining access to UNITA-controlled territory further impeded UNAVEM II in its efforts to keep abreast of the situation in the field.

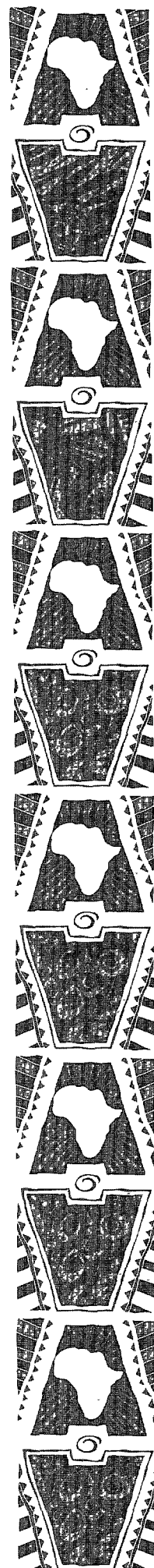
Compounding the situation still further was the question of Angolan forces which remained outside of the official demilitarization process. The neutrality of the national police force proved to be one of the most contentious issues and centred around the establishment of the Emergency Police, popularly known as the "Ninjas". Trained by the notorious Spanish Guardia Civil, the Emergency Police were composed of several military units drawn from the army and the security forces and numbered approximately 4,000. UNITA lodged bitter complaints about the Ninjas, both with the Comissão Controlo Politico e Militar (CCPM - Joint Political Military Commission) and the international community at large, but no substantive action was taken to address this issue. At the same time, the Government reported that UNITA was illegally holding 20,000 troops in reserve in Cuango Cubango province. A UNAVEM investigation team subsequently verified that several hundred unaccounted FALA troops were in fact in that area but, due to the lack of UN personnel, were unable to bring them into the demobilization process. Despite these shortcomings, by May 1992 70 per cent of the 160,000 soldiers were in the Assembly Areas, but of these, only 6,000 had actually been demobilized. By 7 October (a week after the election) UNAVEM II officials claimed that 96,620 FAPLA troops had been demobilized.

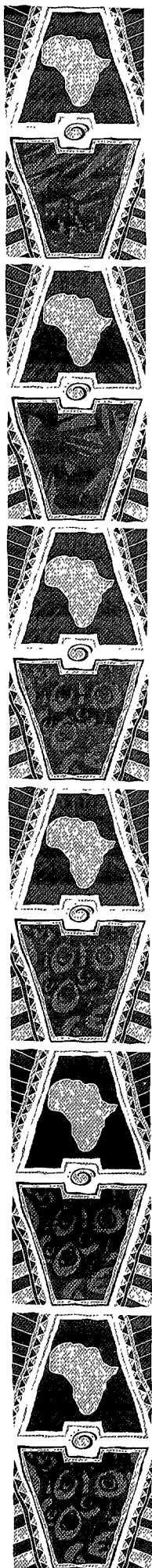
Linked to the problems of demobilization were difficulties experienced in the creation of the new national military. Despite the failure to move forward on establishing a new national army, and in order to maintain the facade of adherence to the Bicesse Accords, the Government and UNITA held an official ceremony on 27 September inaugurating the Forças Armadas Angolanas (FAA - The Armed Forces of Angola). As late as October, 8,800 soldiers had been integrated into the new national army.

E. The Question of Finance

In analyzing UN peacekeeping missions to Africa, there are certain general commonalities which all these missions share (as alluded to above) and some substantial differences. There is, however, one theme which is central to all UN missions, be they in Africa or elsewhere, and that is the role of finance in determining the shape of the operation. The limits of UN peacekeeping have been, and continue to be, ultimately defined in terms of financial capacity. Thus virtually every peacekeeping operation since 1988 has faced a substantial reduction in the personnel component of a mission, from the original figures put forth by the reconnaissance group to those approved by the Security Council and the General Assembly's Fifth Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. This has, in turn, impacted upon the capacity of a UN peacekeeping operation to fulfil the terms of its established mandate which — as is often the case — has not been altered to take into account these changing circumstances.

UNTAG has a reputation of being one of the best resourced of the UN peacekeeping operation in history. Nonetheless, it was subject to the problems and constraints facing all such missions. Despite having literally years to prepare for the mission, when the time came to implementing the objectives of Security Council Resolution 435 (1978), it was clear that little work had been done to realize the actual mechanics of the operation. In the first instance, delays in the passage of enabling legislation by both the Security Council, which only authorized the particulars of the operation on 16 February, and the General Assembly, which gave its approval two weeks later, cut an already narrow margin for deployment of UNTAG to the bare minimum. At the heart of these delays was a dispute over the mission's budget. SWAPO and African states were anxious to see UNTAG maintain its full force strength in the event





of a return to hostilities. Security Council members, on the other hand, who believed that conditions had changed substantially in the territory to warrant a reduction in size and cost of the mission. Ultimately, the Security Council prevailed and UNTAG peacekeeping troops were decreased to 4,650 (while officially remaining at the original figure of 7,500), reducing overall costs from US\$700mn to US\$446mn.

By way of contrast, UNAVEM II in Angola was terribly under-financed, given the responsibilities and problems facing the mission in Angola. On the eve of the mission, the Secretary General's original estimate of US\$121mn was reduced by the Fifth Committee to US\$52mn. Further delays in securing the passage of UNAVEM II's budget by the General Assembly, which did not occur until the mission was well into its second month of operation, forced the hasty organization of bridging funding. Ironically, this financial re-assessment of the UNAVEM budget was attributed in part to the success of UNTAG, which seemed to demonstrate the ease with which multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations could be mounted.

IV. Conclusion

In surveying this brief treatment of the UN's peacekeeping experience in Africa and its implications for African regional and sub-regional organizations, it is clear that substantial obstacles to effective engagement in conflict management and resolution remain for any organization embarking upon a peacekeeping mission. The UN experience would suggest that the patent inability to resolve a host of problems stemming from the organizational deficiencies of the UN and its relationship with member states, have had a demonstrated effect on its ability to perform well in peacekeeping. The ongoing funding crisis, spurred on in large part by those very donor nations which seek to encourage African regional and sub-regional organizations to expand their role in peacekeeping, continues to wreak havoc on the UN's capacity to act in mounting and supporting peacekeeping operations. This dependency on outside finance for peacekeeping operations, the essential component of the Western powers' offer to the OAU and SADC, needs to be closely examined in light of the UN's experience. Fundamentally, if African regional and sub-regional organizations are to play a role in peacekeeping under their current state of preparedness, they must raise their institutional capacity in meeting the logistical requirements of peacekeeping, deepen intra-regional cooperation — especially in the area of national militaries — to facilitate the implementation of peacekeeping and demonstrate a higher degree of political will than has been consistently visible within the UN Security Council itself in order to sustain its commitment to peacekeeping.

Given these cautions, the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, is all the more appropriate here: African regional and sub-regional organizations' strengths still reside in the area of preventive diplomacy. This comparative advantage in peace making needs to be further fostered while one considers the head long rush into the complexities of regional peacekeeping. The spectacle of Rwanda and Burundi, not to mention the simmering calm of SADC's own Angola, may still demand an African solution. But to embark on such ventures without careful consideration of the experiences of the international community in the self-same areas would be a remarkable folly.



A C C O R D

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE
CONSTRUCTIVE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

c/o University of Durban-Westville, Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Tel: +27 31 204 4816/262 9340 • Fax: +27 31 204 4815/262 9346

e-mail: info@accord.udw.ac.za

<http://www.accord.org.za>

Published as part of the Training for Peace in Southern Africa Programme,
and funded through the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI).

© AFRICAN CENTRE FOR THE CONSTRUCTIVE RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

Views expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of ACCORD. While every attempt is made to ensure that the information published here is accurate, no responsibility is accepted for any loss or damage that may arise out of the reliance of any person upon any of the information this paper contains